

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

November 19, 2010

Adoption day means new families for children

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The Spokesman-Review

Tags: foster children national adoption day



Randy and Trish King wait in the hallway of the Spokane County Courthouse to finalize the adoption of 2-year-old Connor on Friday, Nov. 19, 2010. Connor came to their day care and after getting to know him they were willing to adopt him into their family.

Little did Randy and Trish King know when an infant named Connor showed up at their North Spokane day care two years ago that one day he would be theirs.

The boy's parents were young and not at all prepared to raise him, so when he turned 5 months old, the Kings asked Connor's child welfare case manager whether they could raise him.

"We didn't want to see him go back in the system, so we asked if we could have him," Trish King said.

On Friday, four days after Connor's second birthday, the Kings adopted the boy. It was National Adoption Day, celebrated in courtrooms throughout the nation.

The Washington state celebration was co-sponsored by the state Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and the Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration.

Seventeen children were adopted in Spokane County Superior Court on Friday. Connor and six other children were adopted out of the child welfare system, said the Kings' attorney, Mark Iverson, who specializes in adoptions.

For 11 years, National Adoption Day has stressed the importance of moving foster children into permanent family situations, either through reunifying kids with their birth families or through adoption.

From July 2008 through June 2009, a record 1,701 foster children were adopted in Washington. More than 1,500 have been adopted this fiscal year, according to the Children's Administration.

As of August, 9,114 children were living in foster care in the state. More than 1,300 of them were available for adoption.

Connor's adoption was formalized by Court Commissioner Steven Grovdahl in a courtroom ceremony attended by the Kings, their 18-year-old daughter Becky, relatives and friends – all of them victims of Connor's contagious grin.

"Since we got him when he was so little, I just fell in love with him," Trish said.

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